



Innovative teaching methodology of health friendly nutrition development and practice in pre-primary and primary education (HealthEDU) Project ref. No.:2016-1-LT01-KA201-023196

REPORT OF NATIONAL ANALYSIS

RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS OF THE LEGAL AND FACTUAL STATUS AND PROBLEMS IN THE SPHERE OF NUTRITION OF CHILDREN AT THE AGE OF 4 TO 10 YEARS OLD IN LITHUANIA

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1 Introduction

New habits and behaviour of future independent life start to be formed when a child starts attending a pre-school or a school.

During this period, not only adaptation to the educational process and environment, but also the status of health related to nutrition and development of eating habits, is important. Healthy eating is one of the main factors of healthy life for children: it affects their health, growth and development, intellectual and physical activity, emotional status, etc. Children with poor diet get tired very quickly, their intellectual and physical capacity decreases as well as ability to focus and memorize, learning achievements decline, their growth might break down, while puberty might be delayed [1].

According to the scientific research, it has been determined that healthy eating habits acquired in childhood determine health and life quality of an adult [2].

Knowledge about healthy eating, positive attitudes, ability to eat healthy and prepare healthy food to satisfy the needs of healthy eating make the basis of the acquisition of healthy eating habits. Healthy eating habits make part of children’s social skills because by acquiring these habits children also get knowledge about healthy eating, learn how to eat healthy and prepare healthy food for themselves. It helps to develop one’s self-dependence, learn how to take care of him/herself. Therefore, these habits are very important not only concerning a child’s health, but his/her socialization, formation of a personality [1].

Researchers Lagunaite and Zaborskis (2011) claim that preventive nutrition programs in educational institutions should be launched to solve children’s nutrition problems in Lithuania [3].

1.1. National priorities concerned with nutrition, nutrition of children (in kindergartens, schools), health improvement, etc.

The overview of development of general healthy habits of children in the pre-school and school age groups given in the national strategy “Lithuania 2030” sets the following tasks: to orient the



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system of general education towards the development of creativity, civic participation and leadership; to design and implement learning programmes in all educational institutions that would address the development of creativity, search and self-improvement as well as the system of evaluation and self-assessment of competences; to create appropriate learning environment in all schools: laboratories for natural sciences, tools for art education, spaces for healthcare education, etc. [4].

Personalized development of personal skills is especially important in the education of creativity and civic participation. Current educational system is rigid, too little of attention is paid to strengthen critical thinking skills, creativity, implementation of ideas. Study programs are frequently based on repetition, they do not stimulate the processes of thinking, analysis and creation [4].

Yet, responsible institutions in Lithuania constantly improve the existing educational system, seek to implement the measures to improve health of children and youth. Besides, the Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania announced 2014 the year of children's health thus encouraging to pay more attention to the health of children and youth, acquisition of healthy habits and improvement of health indices. [5].

In 2014, the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Lithuania approved the "Strategy to encourage consumption of fruit in educational institutions for 2014-2017". The research showed that people who used to eat much fruit and vegetables keep the habit as adults. Those who eat little of fruit and vegetables do not change their habits later and, moreover, hand over these habits to their own children. The main goal of the strategy is to achieve that children should eat not less than 400 g of fruit and vegetables per day [6].

In 2015, the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Lithuania approved the "Strategy to encourage consumption of dairy products in educational institutions for 2015-2016". The aim of this strategy was to disseminate information about the benefits of dairy products and healthy eating, encourage children appreciate dairy products and get used to them thus contributing to the design of healthy life policy [7].

No less attention should be paid to the hygiene of healthy eating. The last amendment of the law issued by the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Lithuania "Confirmation of regulation of catering organization in pre-school, secondary education and children's social care institutions" determines that "if an institution or an owner or an authorized legal representative contracts an agreement on catering for children in schools or social care institutions (hereinafter Agreement), the Agreement must ensure the responsibility to meet the requirements of hygiene in catering premises. Agreements are not contracted with the providers of catering services or suppliers of food products included on the list of "Rogue Catering Companies" announced on the website of the State Food and Veterinary Service. A provider of catering services must organize catering for all children who wish to receive this kind of service. Agreements contracted before the current Regulation had come into effect must be reviewed and changed, if necessary, to comply with the requirements of the present Regulation from the day the Regulation comes into effect" [8].

1.2. Governmental guidelines and national recommendations

The last amendment of "Confirmation of regulation of catering organization in pre-school, secondary education and children's social care institutions" (that came into effect on 01 01 2016)



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determined that the following groups of food products must not be supplied to schools: chips (potato, corn, other), fried food, sweets, chocolate or chocolate products, confectionary products with icing, chocolate or cream, salty products (where salt exceeds 1g / 100 g ratio, in cheese and meat products – 1.7 g / 100g), food products and chewing gum with additives, drinks in which the amount of sugar exceeds 5 g / 100 g ratio, soft drinks, energy drinks, drinks and food products made of (or containing) coffee tree beans or their extract, chicory, acorn or corn drinks (substitutes for coffee), pap, concentrates of stock or sauces, smoked fish, conserved meat or fish, non-industrial conserved products, chops, mechanically separated meat and its products, offal and their products (except for tongues and liver), food supplements, food products made of genetically modified organisms (hereinafter GMO), or food products containing GMO, food products containing partially hydrogenated vegetable oils [8].

Smoked meat products can be supplied to schools not more than once a week, whereas they should not be provided in preschools at all. Fresh fruit and vegetable, preferably seasonal, should be served everyday [8].

Hygienic conditions to drink water (preferably, of room temperature) for free should also be ensured in schools, even though children are not being catered at that time. It is recommended to supply hot drinkable water for children. Personal or disposable cups, glasses or bottles should be used to drink water in pre-schooling institutions [8].

It should also be emphasized that, from 2018, all child care institutions will have to consider and implement the amended and newly approved (in 2016) law on recommended daily norms of nutrients and energy [9].

Considering the problems of children's overweight and obesity, the newly approved law has established smaller recommended amount of calories by 200 calories per day for each age group. Now it is recommended that 1-3-year-old children should not exceed the daily energy norm of 1200kcal, whereas those of 4-6 years old – 1500 kcal., etc. The new law also takes into consideration the recommended energy norms in relation to physical activity, which was not observed in the previous edition of the law [9].

The present law also provides recommendations on the consumption of fibre. It is noted that, starting with the age of 1 year, a child should to get 8.0-12.5 g 1000 kcal energy from fibre. The amount should increase with the age of a child and reach the norm applied to adults in the adolescence. Moreover, the law provides recommendations as to how much salt should be used and what part of daily diet (in %) should consist of fat, protein and carbohydrates [9].

1.3. Statistics (related to problematic areas)

Monitoring and analysis of children's eating habits is an important task of healthy society, especially regarding the significance of the diet to the physical development, health and life quality. Nowadays there is a lack of new extensive national research of children of preschool and elementary school age groups in Lithuania, also there is no system of children's diet monitoring [10]. Moreover, there is a lack of research that address how the law and legal regulations on catering conditions and quality are kept in pre-schools and primary schools in Lithuania.



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In 2012, after analyzing eating habits of first-graders in five biggest Lithuanian cities (Vilnius, Kaunas, Klaipeda, Siauliai, Panevezys) it was determined that more than two thirds of pupils (69.1 %) used to eat 4-5 times a day, more than one fourth (28.7%) – less frequently [10].

In the opinion of the first-graders' parents, almost half of the pupils had good (46.6%) or sufficient (45.8) appetite, 7.6% of parents indicated that their child had poor appetite. The research revealed that the majority of first-graders (74.8%) used to have their breakfast every day, 8% 4-6 days a week, 13.3% - 1-3 times a week, while 4.2% of first-graders have never had breakfast. More than two thirds (67.6%) of the first-graders who participated in the research used to eat fresh fruit every day or 4-6 times a week, while 44% of primary school pupils used to eat fresh vegetables every day or 4-6 times a week. 45% of first-graders used to eat cereal products (porridges, flakes) every day or 4-6 times a week. One third of the first-graders used to eat cereal products 1-3 days a week [10].

It was noted that 24.8% of first-graders drank natural juice (100%) every day or 4-6 times a week, 34.4% - 1-3 times a week, whereas 40.7% - once or more a month [10].

Parents of the first-graders indicated that their children ate natural meat or products of natural meat – sausages, frankfurters and the like, smoked meat products – more often than chicken. More than one third of first-grader's (37.8%) ate fish 1-3 times a week. Almost half of them (44.1%) ate fish less frequently: once or several times a month; every tenth pupil (10.4%) did not eat it at all. Two thirds (68.5%) of first-graders from the biggest Lithuanian cities ate yogurt, curd, curd cheese and other dairy products 4-6 times a week. 18.6% of the children ate dairy products 1-3 times a week.

The analysis of the use of sugar in tea has revealed that almost half (48.3%) of children add one tea spoon of sugar to their tea, more than one third (38.4%) use 2 and more teaspoons of sugar, every eighth child (13.3%) does not add sugar in tea at all.

To generalize it can be stated that first-graders do not eat enough of fresh fruit, vegetables, natural juice, cereal products, fish and dairy products [10].

According to another research carried out in Klaipeda (2012) during which parents of pre-school age group children were surveyed, 92.1% of the surveyed children ate breakfast, 1.7% did not eat breakfast at all, while 6.2% had their breakfast several times a week. 2.4% of boys and 1.3% of girls never had breakfast. The results of the survey showed that more than two thirds of the children (71.2%) ate 4 or more times a day, while 28.6% ate three times a day. However, 0.2% of children in pre-school age group ate only two times a day; there were no children who ate only once a day [11].

The analysis of eating habits among children in the pre-school age group also addressed the issue what products children ate most frequently. It was noticed that the use of meat and fish varied: boys ate meat and fish more frequently than girls. There were no boys who would not eat meat. 2.5% of boys did not eat fish at all (0.2% of girls) [11].

The majority of children under the research used to eat fruit and vegetables almost every day. Habits of eating fruit and vegetables are similar among boys and girls. However, there were children who did not like and never ate fruit (0.5% girls and 0.8 % boys) and vegetables (2.2% girls and 3.1% boys) [11].

16.6% of children ate brown bread every day, whereas 16.25% chose the white one. Girls used to eat brown bread 3-5 times more frequently a week, while the boys gave their priority to white bread. The research revealed that children in the pre-school age group eat white bread more frequently than brown bread [11].



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To generalize, pre-school age group children in Klaipeda eat enough of meat, but not enough of fish. It is an important product of food that has elements essential for the development of a child. Children also do not eat enough of bakery products [11].

2 2. How catering for children is organized in kindergartens and schools on the national level (especially, in pre-schools and primary schools)

2.1 State of Art

Catering for children in pre-schools and primary schools in Lithuania is organized with regard to two main laws established by the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Lithuania:

- 1. Law** “Organization of catering in pre-school education, general education schools and children’s social care institutions” (the law was established in 11 11 2011; the last edition has come into effect since 01 01 2016)
- 2. Law** “Recommended daily norms of nutrients and energy” (the law was established in 23 06 2016; it will come into effect from 01 01 2018).

Considering the general regulation of the first mentioned law it is required that children’s catering should be organized in canteens or other premises and places adapted for children’s catering. The requirements of food safety and food preparation must be kept and conditions for every child to eat at a clean table must be assured.

At breakfast, children should get 20-25%, at lunch about 30-40%, at late morning snacks and late afternoon snacks about 10-15% (if both meals are organized, their total amount of calories should comprise 10-15%), at dinner about 20-25% of the recommended daily norm of calories, if these meals are established in menus.

2.2 Requirements for food sold in schools

Catering to educational institutions for children and principles of menus formation are regulated by the same Ministry of Health orders which have already been mentioned in the previous chapter.

When the head of the institution or an authorized person signs a contract for food supply to schools or children social care institutions, the contract must include responsibilities for providing food products that do not meet the requirements. It is recommended to create a grocery list with specific names of products, their composition, and net quantity before signing the contract.

Fruits, vegetables, berries, potatoes can be bought from individuals who must follow the requirements issued by the State Food and Veterinary Service Director and must provide a declaration of conformity in accordance with the Minister of Agriculture. These requirements do not apply when fruit, vegetables, berries and potatoes are grown in the school or social care institution,



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but all fruits, berries, vegetables, potatoes for human consumption must meet quality and safety requirements [8].

Food must be prepared and served on the same day. Semi-frozen or chilled food can be served within 24 hours as the hot food is allowed for basic education schools where food can only be heated. Served food must be of high quality, diverse and comply with safety requirements [8].

The same dish can be served only once a week, except drinks and snacks. Main course should be served hot and of protein- rich products (meat, poultry, fish, eggs, legumes, milk and dairy products) and carbohydrate-containing products. Vegetables, fruits or salad must be served with hot meal. Salt, pepper or mustard should not be placed on the table. Only unsweetened tea can be offered. Milk and other drinks for children cannot be served cold, the recommended temperature is not lower than 15 ° C [8].

Meals should be offered to young children at pre-school education institutions at least every 3,5 hours. Menus should be planned regarding recommended daily intake of energy and nutrient standards for children considering the time children spent at school or children social care institutions.

Daily energy and nutritional value in menus can deviate from the norm up to 10 percent, while the average of 15 days cannot exceed 5 percent.

The Law of Ministry of Health oblige each educational institution to publish catering routines and menus on the website [8].

2.3 Regulatory requirements related to the food sold, consumed or served in the school

- Regulation on approval of monitoring rules for substances and residues in animals and animal products. 22nd of July, 2003. No. B1-646.
- Republic of Lithuania Law on Food. 4th of April, 2000. No. VIII-1608.
- Republic of Lithuania Law on Water. 10th of July, 2001 m. No. IX-433.
- Regulation on approval of product labeling and price indication rules. 15th of May, 2002. No.170.
- Regulation on approval of product sampling and Payment Procedure. 13th of September, 2001. No.1103.
- Regulation on approval of Lithuanian hygiene standard HN 15:2005 „Food hygiene“. 1st of September, 2005. No.V-675.
- Regulation on nutrition planning in pre-schools, general education schools and children social care institutions. 11th of November, 2011 (Updates valid from 1st of January, 2016).
- Regulation on the recommended daily nutrient and energy intake. 23rd of June, 2016.
- Regulation on approval for menus coordination procedure in childcare facilities, children social care institutions and children holiday camps. 22nd of June. 2015. No. B1-610.

2.4 Issues identified

According to the results of parents survey about children’s diet during weekends and holidays (when children do not attend pre-school institutions), many parents do not have enough knowledge



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about healthy nutrition. Moreover, irrational and conservative approach dominates in children eating habits. The main children nutrition problem is that they are eating too few vegetables, consume fast food, sugary and fatty snacks, sweetened drinks, and do not follow the eating routine (often skip breakfast) [12].

The survey reveals that the problem of healthy nutrition education in Lithuania is unsolved, because parents having poor knowledge about healthy nutrition are not involved in learning process. This problem should be considered as the main challenge in our health care system.

Another key challenge for Lithuanian society is vegetarianism. Nevertheless vegetarian meals are not recommended for children, it can be prescribed due to religious, ethnic, health or other reasons, but must meet the recommended daily nutrient and energy intake for children, approved by the Lithuanian Minister of Health. When food of animal origin (meat, fish, dairy products, eggs) is not consumed, human body, especially children, may lack the essential nutrients that reduce the quality of the organism protection and increase the risk of various diseases and disorders. To avoid the lack of some nutrients such as, complete protein, minerals and vitamins and to ensure balanced diet, it is recommended to consult a doctor and take food supplements [12].

The analysis of menus, that guide the majority of Lithuanian educational institutions, revealed the dominance of refined wheat flour, potatoes and meat dishes. Healthy snack options are also very limited. White bread and greasy sauces are still included in menus, which proves the use of nutrition standards confirmed 16 years ago. Renewed standards will be valid from the 1st of January, 2018.

Analyzing online menus of educational institutions in Kaunas district, it was noticed that served food lack fiber. Sauces are made of butter, sour cream, refined wheat flour (extra flour), salt, sugar, and part of meat in cutlets is usually replaced by white bread.

Healthy nutrition for children means not only the planning of paper menus. Combining menus, approved by the State Food and Veterinary Service, food is evaluated by name of the dish and nutrients (proteins, fats, carbohydrates). The law states that each institution that organize nutrition must publish menus. However, education institutions menus published online present only the name of the dish. Since each dish can be prepared healthy or not, it requires physical evaluation.

To conclude, the main problem is that laws and decrees for healthy nutrition at local, regional and national level are implemented too slow.

3 Good practices

In Lithuania, there are a lot of examples of good practices for children learning healthy life skills. Some of these practices were initiated national wide, e.g., "Implementing the strategy of promoting milk consumption in children education institutions in 2015-2016" or "the strategy of promoting fruit consumption in children education institutions for 2014-2017".

In 2014, 1575 schools and kindergartens, attended by 214.2 thousand children, participated in milk consumption promoting program, where 89 percent of children were available to receive free products. 1365 schools and kindergartens participated in fruit consumption promoting program in 2012-2013. Products were delivered to 192 454 children or 87% of children that were eligible to receive free products. There are more good practices implemented by municipalities or educational institutions (experience described by participating institutions):



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In 2016, project **"Move strenuously - be healthy"** („Judėk uoliai – būsi sveikuolis“) took place at Smilgių gymnasium in Panevežys. The aim of the project is to form and improve healthy lifestyle attitude and skills. Not only children performed physical activities, but also learned the peculiarities of posture, prepared and tasted green cocktails, learned the basics of healthy nutrition.

In Old Trakai kindergarten, Trakai district, healthy nutrition and healthy lifestyle activities are involved in pre-school education program **"Discovering the World"** („Atrandu pasaulį“). According to the program, the last week of every month is assigned to educate healthy lifestyle, introducing lessons regarding healthy lifestyle, benefits of consuming fruits and vegetables, etc. (**"Fruits and vegetables"** / „Vaisiai ir daržovės“, **"Tasty - distasty"** / „Skanu - neskanu“, **"Healthy - unhealthy"** / „Sveika - nesveika“, **"Vitamins for boys and girls"** / „Vitaminai mergaitėi ir berniukui“, **"What we get from grain"** / „Ką gauname iš grūdų“, **"Goods of autumn"** / „Rudens gėrybės“, **"Delicious and healthy colourful fruits"** / „Skanūs ir sveiki vaisiai spalvoti“, **"Rabbit, carrots and vegetables"** / „Kiškis, morkos ir daržovės“, **"Meet the kingdom of chef"** / „Susipažinkime su virėjos karalyste“, **"Fruits and vegetables on our table"** / „Vaisiai ir daržovės ant mūsų stalo“, **"Cooking soup"** / „Verdame sriubą“, **"We eat healthy"** / „Sveikai maitinamės“, **"Cooking salad"** / „Salotų gaminimas“, **"Gathering the dowry of vegetables"** / „Prisirinkom daržovių kraitelę“, **"Week of Vitamins"** / „Vitaminų savaitė“, **"Life of a plant begins from seed"** / „Nuo sėklos prasideda augalo kelias“ and others.

Teachers with children at kindergarten groups plant onions, seed herbs, vegetables, flowers, which are planted in flowerbeds in May.

Seven kindergartens in Trakai district are members of association, named „**Sveikatos želmenėliai**“. The association propagates the principles of healthy lifestyle within teachers, parents and society, improve teachers' qualifications and share work experience regarding healthy lifestyle education at kindergartens [13].

Children, parents and teachers participated in projects **"Me, mommy and daddy are cooking together"** / „Aš, tėtis ir mama gaminame patiekalą drauge“, **"Growing strong and healthy"** / „Aukime sveiki ir stiprūs“, which took place in kindergarten „Žvangutis“. Separate groups attended health projects: **"Paths of health"** / „Sveikatos takeliai“, **"I wish to grow healthy and strong"** / „Noriu augti sveikas ir stiprus“, **"Growing healthy"** / „Aukime sveiki“. Festivities of drinking herbal tea and preparing healthy meals and salads are organized in pre-school groups every year. During these festivities, parents are invited to participate with their children: mothers with children cook salad, bake bread, prepare and taste herbal tea.

Teachers prepare and escalate themes regarding healthy nutrition, healthy lifestyle and teach children to take good care of their own health. Moreover, there is a flowerbed inside the territory of the institution, where herbs are grown: lemon balm, sage, tarragon, lavender. New space for children active movement is prearranged. To form the principles of healthy lifestyle, morning exercises are performed every morning. Under good weather conditions, morning exercises are performed in open air. Sport entertainment events are organized where the whole community of the institution is invited to participate.

Project **"I will grow healthy and strong"** / „Būsiu sveikas ir stiprus“, took place at Kaunas Valdorfo kindergarten „Šaltinėlis“. During the project, children baked healthy biscuits and cooked salad. As the institution participates in EU project **"Milk for children"**, children received ecologic



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products of "Dobilas", such as vanilla flavoured curd cheese, yogurt, cottage cheese and torn cheese sticks.

Kindergarten also participate in EU project "promoting fruit consumption in children education institutions". As a result, children enjoy fresh apple juice and apples.

Kaunas Environmental Center organized the annual project for a healthy lifestyle and nutrition, called "**Eating apples makes me stronger**" / „Obuoliuką aš kremtu ir labai stiprus esu“, where Kaunas kindergarten "Šviesa" participated. Events of "Bar of healthy people" and "Eveline's Bar" took place, where children learned to draw healthy eating pyramid and set puzzle of "Healthy food".

Kaunas kindergarten "Aušrinė" participate in social project "Health friendly" / „**Sveikatai palankus**“ since 2015. The aim of the project is to form healthy nutrition habits for children, parents and personnel, implement positive attitude, propagate the principles of healthy nutrition and lifestyle in community and introduce health friendly meals in children menus [14]. Children constantly have educational exercises about healthy nutrition and lifestyle, such as various drawing contests, cooking health friendly snacks and other activities.

"**European day of healthy food**" is celebrated in Vilnius kindergarten "Linelis". Healthy snacks, such as fruit salad and oatmeal biscuits are prepared during the week of Health. Lessons and activities are organized to emphasize that to be healthy, one must eat healthy food and exercise.

Piliunos gymnasium celebrate the Wellness day named "Vegetables- fruits", participate in project "By the path of autumn" and celebrate the day of healthy nutrition.

Private kindergarten "Vaikystės lobiai", located in Kaunas district, organize projects "**Ecologic flowerbed**" / „Ekologiška lysvė“ and "**Green windowsill**" / „Žalia palangė“ and prepare themes of the week, such as: "**In grandpa's garden**" / "Senelio kieme" (children learn where products on our table comes from); egg testing (cooked or raw); analyzing, recognizing and tasting different types of cabbage; producing curd; "**In grandma's kitchen**" / „Močiutės virtuvėje“: tasting tea, recognizing herbals, learning about herbals which cure various diseases. Children bake bread, Christmas Eve cookies, apple pies, biscuits, etc. and playing games learn to recognize grains and set puzzles of healthy food.

In respect of mandatory principles for children healthy nutrition, PI „Sveikatai palankus“ consult educational institutions and form menus with modern, easy to make and tasty dishes. Fresh fruits and vegetables are served with each meal and there are no low-quality products included. Certainly, individual requirements for each institution can be applied.

In 2016 PI „Sveikatai palankus“ initiated project "Health friendly education institution" / „Sveikatai palanki ugdymo įstaiga“ (more information can be found online <http://sveikataipalankus.lt/sveikatai-palankiu-ugdymo-istaigu-tinklas/>). The aim of the project is to present children nutrition peculiarities for community and responsible institutions and initiate alterations.



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4. Identified problems at national levels/initiatives that should be implemented (i.e. non-formal education initiatives) and conclusions

Non- formal education is an interesting method of implementing new skills and competences. The purpose of non- formal education is to meet the needs, which ensure good quality of life for now and for the future [15].

One of the main goals of National Education Strategy for the year 2013-2022 is, developing non- formal education among children and young people, promote their individual capabilities and implement special educational needs [15].

However, education participants, analytics and assessors name ineffective organization, insufficient availability and insufficient funding, as the major problems of non- formal education in Lithuania. Non- formal education quality assurance and disproportion of educational programs supply and demand, should be considered as the most important issues [15].

After State audit in 2014, it was found that monitoring data of non- formal education students is insufficient to make reasonable decisions in informal education development. There is no statistics of how many children participate in non- formal education at schools. Representative of Ministry of Education claims that the search of new data collection opportunities is implemented. For example, education providers introduce the number of participants in activities, but as long as one student can attend various activities in different institutions, the actual number of participants is unknown. Moreover, municipalities are missing an accounting system for participants of non- formal education. The problem of inaccurate accounting system in Siauliai and Klaipeda municipalities has been solved by creating electronic certificate for students. This could be a good example for other municipalities [16].

It was also noted, that the Ministry of Education have no information of all funds assigned for non- formal education on the national level. Accurate and detailed statistics of non- formal education participants, service providers and assigned funds, would allow the Ministry of Education organize the purposeful development of this education system [16].

The diversity of offered activities in accordance with children/ parents needs and the accessibility of non-formal educational institutions network for all students, especially in rural areas and disadvantaged children, was revised during the audit. The audit also found, that non-formal education classes were attended by an average of about 57 percent of students in 2011-2013. The number of municipal non-formal education institutions decreased (3.4 percent) during the audit. The number of students participating in organized activities decreased accordingly (2.4 percent). It should be noted that in 2011-2013, the attendance of students belonging to social exclusion groups, where non-formal education for children is relevant, also decreased (about 7 per cent.) [16].

Municipalities failed to use the amount of student's basket of funds, assigned for non-formal education, purposefully. It was found, that municipalities rearranged provided funds and distributed less than it was planned for non-formal education specifically. In 2013, 12 municipalities spent on non-formal education only 15 percent of recommended amount. Municipalities specified that student's basket of funds were reallocated and used for the implementation of general development plans for general education schools where student's basket funds were insufficient. The audit



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clarified calculation and allocation methodology for student's basket of funds and from the 1st of January, 2015 limited reallocation opportunities for other activities [16].

The material base and educational environment of non-formal education institutions does not always meet the requirements and expectations of the students. According to the Law on Education, learning environment at school and workload must meet hygiene, safety and health standards and ensure the implementation of education programs. The quality of non-formal education is depreciated by unattractive material base and educational environment - an outdated, low-quality equipment, abandoned and unheated classes. Parents are concerned about their children safety during sport activities. Thus, parent's expectations for high-quality equipment and suitable leisure environment is directly linked to the child's health and safety [16].

In conclusion, from legal and regulatory perspective, non-formal education situation in Lithuania requires improvement. Effective institutional cooperation would ensure higher quality and development for non-formal education. In respect of non-formal education at the institutional level, we can be prudent to conclude that the situation is good enough, as relatively high level between relative institutions is maintained by the efforts of administration of individual educational institutions, teachers and parents.

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